

## **We are telling management: Listen to caregivers!** Give us raises that retain staff and serve our community

It is critical that frontline and bedside caregivers receive significant raises, in order for our hospital to survive and thrive and serve our community. For example, pay for our RNs is about 10 percent behind what Kirkland RNs make at every pay step. Come January, our Service pay scales — for coworkers who do critical work for patient safety and quality — in addition to being just as far behind other area hospitals, will also be less than \$1/hour more than the minimum wage for the entire state of Washington.

### **Bargaining Recap**

At bargaining this week, we had a frank and illuminating discussion with our hospital's Chief Financial Office Anne Peterson that revealed how differently we see these problems.

At bargaining, management gave a presentation about the hospital's finances that included "areas of risk" to the hospital's financial outlook for 2023. Retaining and recruiting staff was not mentioned anywhere in management's area of risk, and when we asked about it, management said it was in another "people plan" somewhere but they (multiple upper administrators in the room) couldn't speak to any specifics. This is despite the fact that we all know we are hemorrhaging nurses and other healthcare workers every single day — people who are skilled, qualified, and experienced to work at our hospital but are leaving our hospital because the pay is too low.

Management said one "area of risk" for the hospital is how high inflation might get next year — and touted the raises we negotiated as a union last year as great pay increases we already got. They are totally tone-deaf to the fact that our lowest-paid coworkers got thirty or forty cent raises last year. With management's 2% raise proposal, our economic security is sure to go down, not up, with the inflation that we and our families are facing.

### **EvergreenHealth can afford to pay us our worth**

We learned from information management provided in the bargaining process that in the first 9 months of 2022, the hospital spent more than **\$3.4 million** dollars on traveler and agency staff. This would average out to around \$20,000 for each of the 175 employees in our bargaining unit. The \$3.4 million does not even take into account management's additional spending on five-figure recruitment bonuses, which is a wasted effort, if newly-recruited staff aren't paid enough in their annual pay so they leave as soon as their service commitment is over.

By management's own calculation, \$3.4 million is almost twice what they believe implementing our entire opening first-year economic proposal—including 20% raises, new training and education funds, and significant increases in premiums—would cost. Why not invest in us to stay at the hospital, versus travelers who by definition are only here because there are not enough permanent staff, and then complete their contract and leave?!

Management's explanation for why they are only proposing minimal raises is upsetting. They said it is because we are a small, public hospital. However, they admitted that part of their own management compensation is tied to the performance of the entire Evergreen system, including the 300-bed hospital in Kirkland. But for us frontline workers, we are totally separate, and because we have a smaller number of beds, that is why our pay is lower.

We saw in public online records that our administrators got significant compensation increases and retirement funding in 2021 (the most recent year data is available), while for us management proposes 2% raises, will not commit in our contract to the current "incentive shift" rates when we work extra to fill the need, and funded our 2021 retirement contributions almost 10 months late, in the end of September 2022.



"Our bargaining team is working so hard to get our proposals passed. Our team meets weekly and feel like we're finally making some headway. Show your support for your bargaining team and sign our unity petition. We deserve a fair contract!" - **Emily Perron, RN, Med/Surg**



Scan this QR code with your phone's camera to sign our unity petition

<https://1199nw.org/3BKwDuD>

## Other area hospitals have stepped up for their workers

Other hospital systems have recognized the need to do bargaining differently to recruit and retain caregivers. Swedish and UW came to our union to open existing contracts early and with opening proposals for double-digit raises for thousands of healthcare workers. Our union siblings recently reached contract agreements there including raises of over 20%, with minimum increases of \$6.50/hour for every worker in every job.

This is not just about Seattle or big, urban hospitals, although we absolutely lose staff to those employers. Members of our union have reached contract agreements this year with significant raises at Olympic Medical Center in Port Angeles, Peace Health St. Joe's in Bellingham, Trios Health in Kennewick and Klickitat Valley Health in Goldendale, among many others. Colleagues in other healthcare unions like nurses at Seattle Children's and service workers at Providence Everett also won significant pay increases.

## We stand unified for what we deserve

We call on management to reconsider their approach and come to us with serious economic proposals that will retain and value caregivers. Our next bargaining session is being rescheduled by management. We call on them to use the time to come to bargaining ready to settle a contract that meets our key priorities, including:

- ★ **Significant, competitive pay increases that both retain experienced caregivers and ensure every coworker at the hospital makes a truly living wage**
- ★ **Secure benefits, including regular retirement contributions and stable healthcare**

Talk to a bargaining team member about our next steps to take action for the contract we need.



"Management has emphasis on the fact that the pay increases they offered in their counterproposal are gracious. However, that wouldn't have been my choice of words! If you ask me, their offer of 2% and 3% is more than offensive considering all the hardship we have had to endure across the hospital.

Service workers are some of the lowest paid individuals in this hospital that hardly make above minimum wage. With management's proposal, that would actually put us below the minimum wage in Seattle come 2023. We are expected to do the work of 3 people, all the while receiving praise from our co-workers but neglecting to get that same treatment from management. It is offensive and a blow to the face to be told that a single unnamed person in management's pay increase is almost 3 times the amount of my yearly income! While I should be satisfied with a potential 38 cent pay increase, since that's what they are offering individuals in my department, we cannot and will not!" - **Roshana Revenig, Environmental Services Tech**

"In these bargaining negotiations we are advocating to retain our co-workers to keep our departments running efficiently. In order to keep our doors open we need to focus on worker retention and our hospital should invest in us." - **Kirsten Bursch, RN, Emergency Department**



### Our Bargaining Team:

Nancy Anderson, RN, Detox and Recovery  
Heather Beierle, RN, Surgery  
Kirsten Bursch, RN, Emergency Department  
Kevin Collison, RN, Surgery  
Junga Jang, RN, Ambulatory Care  
Rachel Kraft, RN, Emergency Department  
Hanna Park, Dietary Aide, Food and Nutrition  
Emily Perron, RN, Med/Surg  
Roshana Revenig, Environmental Services Tech